SOME HISTORY OF EARLY-DAY STEAMBOATING ON YAQUINA BAY

Charles Scott Neville

By JACK FOGARTY

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Ships Crossing in and Out of the Bay and Allied Subjects Thereto

Newport, Oregon

August 28, 1956

INTRODUCTION

At a meeting of the Lincoln County Historical Society early in the year 1956 President Darwin Nash appointed a committee on publications whose duty it would be to see to it that there be a publication for the current year as 1956 is the centennial of shipping on Yaquina bay.

During recent years, four publications were as follows: No. 1 Lincoln County Lore, compiled by Leslie L. Haskins; No. 2 and No. 3 A Glimpse of Newport 75 years ago, (two volumes) by Lucy Blue; and No. 4 Life of the Litchfield Family, By Mr. and Mrs. Paul Van de Velde.

We are now introducing Publication No. 5 of the Lincoln County Historical Society which has been compiled and written by Jack Fogarty concerning ships and shipping and related subjects, particularly in and around Yaquina Bay, Oregon. The book is in Mr. Fogarty's own language, which is the language of a marine engineer who has spent a large part of his life in the bowels of vessels plying deep sea waters as well as having been a life saver and inland boatman in and around Yaquina Bay.

The book belongs to Jack Fogarty and it has our blessing.

JOE WILSON,
Chairman of Committee on Publications
Lincoln County (Oregon) Historical Society.
August, 1956.

SOME HISTORY OF EARLY-DAY STEAMBOATING ON YAQUINA BAY

By Jack Fogarty

In Fagan's History of Benton County published in 1885, of which Lincoln was then a part, it is recorded the first vessel to enter Yaquina Harbor was the Schooner "Calamet" in 1856.

From other sources it is learned that a schooner was wrecked near the bar and washed ashore on the North beach in 1852, the survivors, including some passengers, were fed and well treated by the Indians.

I will have more to say about the wreck and other matters relating thereto later on. It is my principal concern to give an account of early marine events, though meager, that will, I hope, be of interest to the reader and of some historical value.

The first vessel to enter Yaquina Bay was the schooner "Calamet" in the year 1856 with supplies for Phil Sheridan, discharged at a depot on Depot Slough. According to Lewis and Dryden's Marine History, published in 1895, she was commanded by Captain William Tichnor, and was owned by Captain John Harlow. Later, with seven persons aboard she was lost on a trip from Puget Sound with all on board in 1860. She was built in East Portland.

The first steamer to enter the Bay was the "Rover", afterwards named "Pioneer" and by the name of Pioneer operated as the first steamboat on the Bay, arriving in 1866. Portland owners sent her here under the command of Captain Bochan, then she was run by Cyrus E. Carr. Later the Kellog Bros. became her owners, running from Elk City to Newport. The Kellogs are known as the pioneer steamboat men of Yaquina Bay. One of them, Captain Orin Kellog, is referred to as Master of this and another boat, the "Oneatta", they later built. "Pioneer" was built at Milwaukie, Oregon, in 1864.

The first known ocean steamer to enter Yaquina Bay was said to have done so in 1867. She was the lighthouse tender "Shubrick", built at Philadelphia as a Revenue Cutter, was transferred to the lighthouse department for use on the Pacific Coast. She was used to bring supplies and material for the building of the Yaquina

The steamer "Yaquina Bay", formerly the "Caracas", wrecked on the south jetty entrance to Yaquina Bay, Dec. 9, 1888. The steamer was built by the Cramps Co., an Eastern shipbuilding firm, 1881. It was 257 feet long, 34 foot beam, hold 21 feet deep.

Head lighthouse, completed in 1873 and put in operation in 1874. Dimensions of Shubrick were: length 140 feet, beam 22 feet, depth of hold 7 feet. Sidewheel powered with a single cylinder engine, 50 inches diameter by 48 inches stroke and was commanded by Captain Jesson.

First steamboat to be built on the Bay was the Oneatta, a side wheeler, built at Pioneer above Elk City, by Kellog Bros. in 1872; tonnage 118; length 82 feet, said to have gone to Portland in 1882, the year of about when Captain Bensell went on the run and the Kellogs quit steamboating on Yaquina Bay.

A little side-wheeler the Mollie, was built at Elk City in 1874, being second boat of the kind to be built on the Bay. She was only fifty-four feet long and that is the extent of knowledge about her available, except that her career ended in 1881.

The ferry-boat Rebecca C. was built at South Beach in 1883, owner and operater, L. E. Davis and sons, Zenas and Tracy. She was on the run between Newport and South Beach until 1898, when dismantled. She had capacity for wagons with teams, as well as passengers.

Captain R. A. Bensell had built at the same time or somewhat previous a small propeller called Mary Hall, which he used first and then the side-wheeler Cleveland, when he took over the Newport-Elk City run for the Kellogs.

This treatise would not be complete without mention of several small schooners built on the Bay. The most prominent one was the Elnorah built on the Bay in 1871 by the Newport Transportation Company, Ben Simpson, President. She was a three master, 106 feet long, 31 feet beam and 8 feet depth of hold. This vessel ran to San Francisco and Portland. How her career ended is a question.

A smaller craft of schooner rig had been built by the early settlers in 1867 at South Beach. Tragedy overtook this vessel early in her career—not by the sea, but the greed of man. The little vessel—Flora Maybell—sailing to San Francisco, was there sold by its skipper, and after pocketing the proceeds, he disappeared.

Another small schooner was built about the same time the "Flora Maybell" was built. She was built at Olsonville and called "Annie Simpson".

Of the schooners, the only one that was capable of a long voyage was the "Elnorah" that ran as far as San Francisco for merchandise to supply Bay residents, and report has it that she carried out lumber on her maiden trip to San Francisco.

Larger schooners ran out of San Francisco in the '60's and '70's with merchandise for this Port and took oysters on the return trip.

In the early '80's the little vessels were displaced by larger schooners, barks and ships. These latter windjammers brought railroad iron for the Oregon Pacific Railroad, then under construction, until completion of the road late in 1884. This iron first came from England in bond to San Francisco in much larger sailing ships.

At one time there was an accumulation of thirteen of these vessels awaiting to be towed in to anchorage by the tug "Favorite" which had been purchased in San Francisco by the railroad company for that purpose. After getting them to safety in the harbor, they had to later be towed to Yaquina City, the terminus of the road.

Before going further, mention should be made that several of the small schooners coming for oysters were wrecked on the bar and piled up on South Beach. The first one there is mention of was the Schooner "Doyle" in 1865, crossing out with oysters. Three more, all with oysters, between the dates of 1865 and 1874 were Schooner "Lizzie", Captain J. J. Winant; Schooner "Caroline Madison", Captain Madison, and the "Ona". A name board of the "Ona" was found on South Beach in 1884 by the writer.

Now going back to early steamboating on the Bay—the Kellogs' first on this run continued until 1882.

Although the railroad was completed in 1885 and put into operation then, mail contract was still held by the Newport-Elk City Route.

Captain Kellogg seems to have controlled the Newport-Elk City run until 1882, first with the "Pioneer" and then the "Oneatta".

When Kellog left the route, Captain R. A. Bensell took over with a small propeller, the "Mary Hill", and later with steamer "Cleveland", built in Portland in 1879, of 47 tons, length 61 feet, side wheel. Career of the "Cleveland" ended when the railroad company got the business in 1887, having got the mail contract continuing to Newport from Yaquina.

The "Cleveland's" days ended on a mud-flat in Sally's Bend, sometimes called Miller's Bend.

One time during Kellog's career with the "Pioneer" and "Oneatta", a man called Stormy Jorden brought in a fast propeller steamer from Umpqua to run in opposition to Kellog's. Without much success, it is presumed. There is no information as to her career—her name was "Elk".

I feel somewhat disappointed that I am unable to ferret out further information on this subject, one of vital interest to the early settlers.

Although this subject is primarily on steam vessels, it is inter-

esting to know row boats played a prominent part in early days of boating on the bay and river.

First to connect with the wagon road from Corvallis to Elk City was said to be a row boat up one day to Elk City, returning the next to Newport.

Mrs. Lucy Blue relates in a "Glimpse of Newport 75 Years Ago" (written in 1949) she took the mail-boat at Elk City, run by Wm. White in 1873, about 7 years after run began which proves competition and rivalry continued a long time. Due to grounding on mud flats, machinery or fog trouble, rowboats often won the race against the steam boat.

My next chapter will tell of the beginning of the hey-days of the '80's and '90's with larger ships and boats.

THE '80'S AND '90'S SEE LARGER SHIPS COMING TO YAQUINA BAY

Quoting from Lewis and Dryden's Marine History, the "S. S. Yaquina City" came to this coast early in the year 1884 and began to operate from Yaquina Bay to San Francisco the same year. She run to Gulf Ports, on East Coast as the "West Texas", thus becoming the first ocean steamer on this run. This ship had a tonnage of 1200 tons and draft fully loaded of 15 feet, running with a chartered fleet mate, the "Santa Maria". When two more vessels were added, the "Santa Maria" was dropped. The steam ships "Eastern Oregon" and "Willamette Valley" went on run in 1897.

The "Yaquina City," wrecked on Dec. 7, 1887, as it was approaching the bar. The steering gear gave way, and she drifted on to the south beach and became a total wreck.

These vessels were smaller than the "Yaquina City", being about 900 tons and drawing 14 feet, loaded.

The "Eastern Oregon" formerly the "Palatka", was built at Chester, Pennsylvania in 1883, burned in December, 1891, on Marine Ways at Olympia, Washington. The "Willamette Valley" was built at Wilmington, Delaware, in 1883.

The "Yaquina City" was wrecked December 7, 1887; the "Willamette Valley" continued on the run until May, 1894.

The "Yaquina Bay", formerly the "S. S. Caracas", was brought from the East Coast in 1888, coming of course, via Cape Horn, making the trip in 60 days, and was wrecked on her maiden voyage on the bar December, 1888, under circumstances that implied sabotage.

In a later chapter I will explain how the company, after losing the two ships, with financial trouble, too, were forced into bankruptcy.

Again back to steamboating on the Bay with tow boats entering the picture.

When the harbor work began in the early '80's by U. S. Engineers, they bought an ocean-going tug, the "General Wright", for survey purposes, and, as a tow-boat, she was purchased in San Francisco and came under the command of Captain Pennell; he being unfamiliar with the Bar, launched a small boat to take soundings. The boat was capsized and the Captian drowned. The "Wright", found it was too much work to do surveying here and in other harbors too, as well as tow barges for the jetties, so another tow boat was engaged to assist. This was the "Walluski" from Astoria. Another tug on rock towing job was the "Favorite"; another and smaller "Favorite"—not the first bar tug. This latter tug was owned by J. J. Winant and Mike Buckley, early boatmen connected with the Bay and Coastwise vessels. More about them in another chapter.

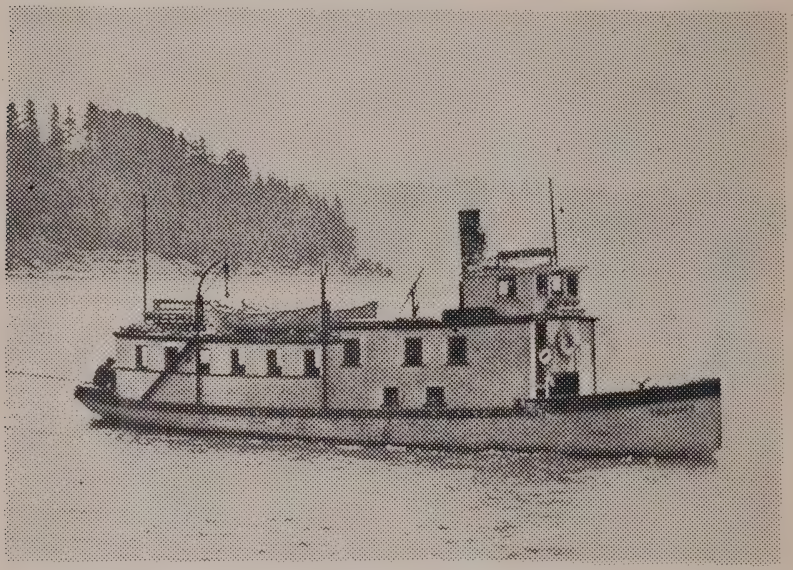
In 1886 Captain James Chatterton placed the "Tressa May" on the Newport-Yaquina run, being the pioneer on that route. The "Tressa May" formerly the "Robert G. Ingersoll", had been built for seagoing service. Captain Chatterton, who bought her, converted her into a river type freight and passengr boat. In 1888 he built the "T. M. Richardson" to replace "Tressa May", which was dismantled. Her remains were to be seen for many years at Dumpy Brown's Landing across from Parker's Mill, Yaquina.

The "T. M. Richardson" plied on the route, ran almost continuously for over twenty years, being replaced in 1908 by the steamer "Newport".

The "Richardson", it was soon found, was too small to handle the increasing business. A double deck unpowered boat called the "Elk" was built. The "Richardson" towed this craft alongside often when the travel was brisk.

A similar type "double decker" to be towed, later, was built to replace the "Elk", called the "Julia", namd after the writer's sister, and wife of Captain Jacobson, who commanded the "Richardson" and then the "Newport" after Captain Chatterton sold out to him and Marshall.

Some men allied with the Railroad caused Captain Chatterton some trouble for a time. They built a fast, much larger, handsome passenger and freight carrier called "Volanta". This was in 1892. On the run scarcely over two years, caught fire at her dock in Newport and was destroyed. During the winter of '94-'95, with the



The steamer "Truant," owned by Jack Fogarty, operated on the bay carrying freight and passengers and doing towing service until 1919.

loss of the "Volanta", the route was run with a row-boat by Hume Brothers, Jim and Bob. Later, M. M. Davis bought the "Richardson", repaired and placed her on the run. A year or so after the turn of the century, David sold to John Marshall, a pioneer steamboatman of Portland, and Captain O. F. Jacobson. A few years later Marshall sold his interest to Mort Abbey, son of pioneer Hotelman Abbey. The "Newport's" steam engine was replaced a few years after being built by an 80 h.p. standard gas engine.

The "Newport" continued on the route until in the '20's; then stages from Corvallis made connection, carrying passengers, mail and freight trains until 1934, when the road was abandoned from Toledo to Yaquina.

Steamboats, though few, continued up to 1929. When the "Volanta" burned there was a gap partly filled by tug "Resolute" on the summer run, and one time a stern-wheeler tried to encroach on the run, with little success. This was a river boat from the Columbia called "Montesano".

The steamer "Truant", a propeller, was built at Toledo in 1910, and was bought in 1911 by Jack Fogarty (the writer) and continued to operate on the Bay carrying freight, passengers and doing towing, until 1919. Length 55 feet, beam 12 feet, depth 5 feet. She went to the Columbia River in 1919.

In 1912 the steam dredge "Oregon" worked on the Bay and as far as Toledo. During World War I the tug "Roberts" towed rock for the jetties.

The sea-going steam tug "F. A. Douty" towed log rafts to Portland in 1925 from the Bay.

Also during World War I the stern-wheeler "Powers" was used to transfer locomotives and cars to Idaho Point, the north terminal of the Yaquina Southern Railroad which the War and Spruce Corporation were building to Yachats to procure airplane spruce.

In 1922 C. D. Johnson bought the holdings of the Spruce Production Corporation. They finished the Toledo mill and began hauling logs from Yachats over Yaquina Southern to the Bay. They placed two steamers on run to San Francisco; first the "Robert Johnson" and then "C. D. Johnson" to carry lumber. The lumber produced at Toledo had to be barged to the ships docked at Newport. To do this barging, and tow logs up to the mill coming to the Bay from Yachats, a tug was required. Securing a contract from this company, my brother Frank and I undertook the job with the steam tug "Aleut" we purchased at Seattle. We were succeeded in 1925 by the company's Diesel tug "Go-getter". The "Aleut" worked years '25, '26 and '27 for U. S. Engineers on bar work.

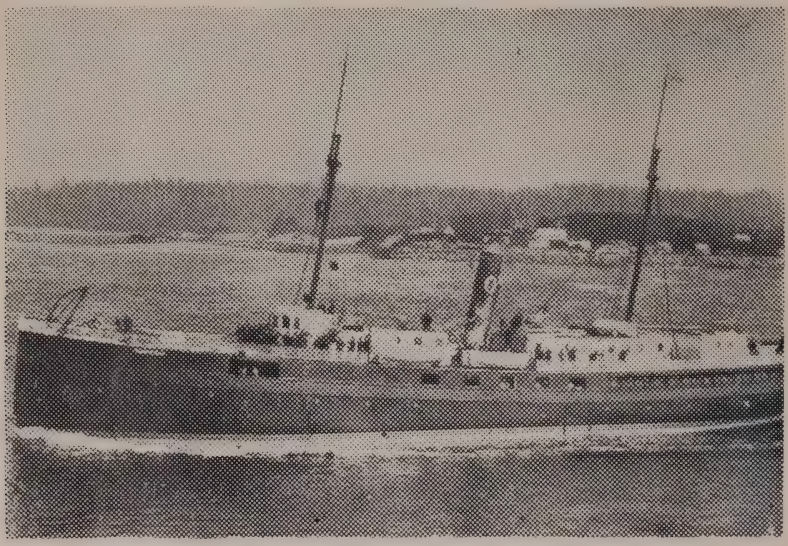
In 1928 the "Aleut" was taken to Longview, Washington, there to tow logs. This was the last steamboat to operate on the Bay, ending experiences filled with thrills and adventure, known only in those days of iron men and wooden ships.

Having concluded "Steam-boats and Ships", will conclude this chapter by making mention of some small steam schooners and a steam tug built on the Bay. In 1886 Captain J. J. Winant built

the "Mischief" at Oneatta. She was used to run to coast ports and to take fishing parties over the bar. Her dimensions were about 90 feet long, 18 feet beam, and 7 feet depth. She was taken to Alaska in 1890 to join the sealing fleet.

Two more steam schooners of similar size as the "Mischief" were built at Oneatta in 1889—one called "August", the other the "George H. Chance".

The Oregon Pacific Railroad Company built the tug "Resolute" at Mill Four in 1887.



Sister vessel to the "Yaquina City", the "Willamette Valley" was on run from San Francisco to Yaquina Bay from 1887 *to* 1894.

This splendid sea-going tug being well powered, was one of the best on the coast. She was sold for a small sum compared to the original cost, as a result of the bankruptcy of the company. The bankrupt Oregon Pacific under a receivership, continued until 1898, and with small chartered steam schooners some semblance of former business was carried on. Some of the chartered vessels were the "Weott", "Luella", "Homer", "Scotia", and the "Farallon", last on the run, left in 1898 to engage in the Klondike rush in Alaska. The "Scotia" carried building rock to San Francisco, quarried at Pioneer. Some buildings built out of this material withstood the 1906 earthquake, notably the Call and Parrot Buildings.

With the ending of the Oregon Pacific, up to 1923, Yaquina Bay experienced many long years of hardship, trials and tribulations.

Jetty work had ended and in 1900 the town of Yaquina burned. For many years, up to 1923, all the shipping in and out of the port was a few small gas schooners, with the exception of two steam tugs, the "Robarts" and "Rosco", that occasionally came to Yaquina from Siuslaw for freight. In 1913, two steam schooners tried taking out lumber from Toledo. They were the "Bandon" and "Fiefield". A bad bar caused them to be bar bound so much they were forced to quit.

The barge "Julia" being towed by steamer "Newport," owned by the Newport Navigaton company. The "Newport' was the last ferry from Yaquina to Newport, ending its service in the early 20's.

In 1910 we organized the Ports of Newport and Toledo, and in desperation offered to go fifty-fifty with the Government, bonding ourselves, to repair and continue the jetties, which was carried out during World War I.

To the best of my knowledge, I have covered commercial steam vessels up to 1929.

Other steamers, tramps so-called, entered the harbor occasionally.

One time, about 1910, the steamer "Frances H. Legget" took a million feet of lumber, brought from Detroit, East end of railroad, out of Yaquina City. Then of course, there were the Lighthouse Tenders, first the "Shubrick", the Manzanita", "Columbia", and others.

Some of the early day Seafarers entering this Port, and Steamboatmen on the Bay were:

On the first bar tug, Capt. James Robertson and Engineer Charles O'Hara. Capt. J. J. Winant, previously referred to, was lost on the Coaster "Bandorille", washed overboard and drowned,

crossing the Siuslaw bar in the early '90's. The name "Bandorille" was derived from Bandon, Oregon, and Coquille. She was formerly the "George H. Chance", which was cut in two and lengthened.

Old life saving station located near present Surfland, established 1896 *and transfered to Newport in* 1906.

Two popular Captains entering the Port on Oregon Pacific ships were Capt. Patton of the "Eastern Oregon" and Capt. Storrs of the "Willamette Valley". To mention two engineers on that run, one was Brocky McDermott, and another was Harry Wilson. Wilson married Jennie Maggison, a pioneer's daughter.

Some Steamboatmen, serving in the middle era, so-called, and later, were Engineer Mort Lollis, later Chief on Coastwise and Alaska ships. He was the father of Capt. M. Lollis. Captain Tracy Pilot, and Capt. O. F. Jacobson, Ferryboat Captain, were others.

There were many others of the marine fraternity, too numerous to mention.

There remains much more that could be said of the ships, boats, and men who operated them, if space permittd.

I have heretofore stated I would give further light on the wreck Davis, Bay and River Pilot, Capt. Frank Fogarty, Bay and River of the "Juliet". I hesitate to say that I took the story from Mrs. Theresa Roper's "Rebounding Vengeance", as it is a book mixed with fable and fact. However, from other sources, I learn it is so—that a schooner was lost near the mouth of the Bay. The Captain's name was Collins and he spent two months on the Bay, or until a

rescue party from the "Willamette Valley" conveyed them out. Our Historian, Joe Wilson, says there was an account of Capt. Collins' adventure, published by papers of that day, notably Oregon City and Salem.

I now conclude this article, leaving to others to record shipping and allied events from here on.

This year, 1956, is the Centennial of Yaquina Bay shipping. With more depth of water to be secured on the bar and new territory tapped, such as the Willamette Valley for trade, the future of the Bay is bright.

THE UNITED STATES LIFE SAVING STATION ESTABLISHED ON SOUTH BEACH

The Life Saving Station at South Beach was completed and manned in April, 1896.

The crew of the original life saving station. Left to right, first row, Frank Ayerde, Capt. O. S. Wicklund, Albert Beyer. Second row, Victor Peterson, Jack Fogarty, O. F. Jacobson, Walter Whitten and William Bullus.

Members of the first crew were:
Captain O. Wicklund, Astoria.
No. 1 Spanish Frank Ayerde, Fisherman (local).
No. 2 Albert Byer, German Sailor, Astoria.
No. 3 Victor Peterson, Swedish Sailor, Astoria.
No. 4 William Bullis, local.
No. 5 O. F. Jacobson, Boatman, Astoria, later skipper of ferry

boats.

No. 6 Jack Fogarty, local.

No. 7 Walter Whitten, local, son of Yankee Sea Captain.

Bullis, Whitten and Fogarty selected for skill in boatmanship.

Was U. S. Life Saving Service until 1917, then Coast Guard.

Captain Wicklund served about two years and was followed by Jack Clark, and others.

A practice drill in a surf boat during the early days of the Life Saving Station on Yaquina Bay.

Station at South Beach abandoned in 1906. Crew moved to Newport. Old Light House was used for crew quarters and look-out.

Captain Anton Gustafson came to Yaquina Bay in 1910 and served under Captain Wellander who was District Superintendent in 1912 at which time Captain Stewart took charge until his death in 1916.

Captain Hunt took charge in 1916 and served until his retirement in 1929.

Captain Anton Gustafson was in charge from 1929 until 1933.

Captain V. I. Simmons succeeded Captain Gustafson.

First boat house near present site on beach was burned in 1930. Station on waterfront near New England fish plant burned in 1942.

THE OLD YAQUINA BAY LIGHTHOUSE ADDS ROMANCE TO THE BAY

Many people drive out to the State Park, parking near the old "haunted" lighthouse. They gaze seaward, while listening to what the wild waves are saying. Suppose, continuing your reveries, the night comes on and suddenly you are startled by an unfamiliar voice coming from nowhere. Being near the haunted lighthouse, it dawns on you it is the ghost talking. You think to humor him or her, and you being a stranger, learn a lot about the old ghost-ridden landmark and environments: You evaluate what you hear, coming from a ghost, for what it is worth.

The ghost's home (old lighthouse) was built in 1871 as an aid to navigation. About three years later it was abandoned, it being found it was in the wrong location. A more modern light was established at Yaquina Head.

When the keeper moved out, Captain R. A. Bensell moved in as Caretaker. During the '80's and '90's the building was used as a residence. From 1906 it was used to house the Life Saving Crew, until new quarters were provided.

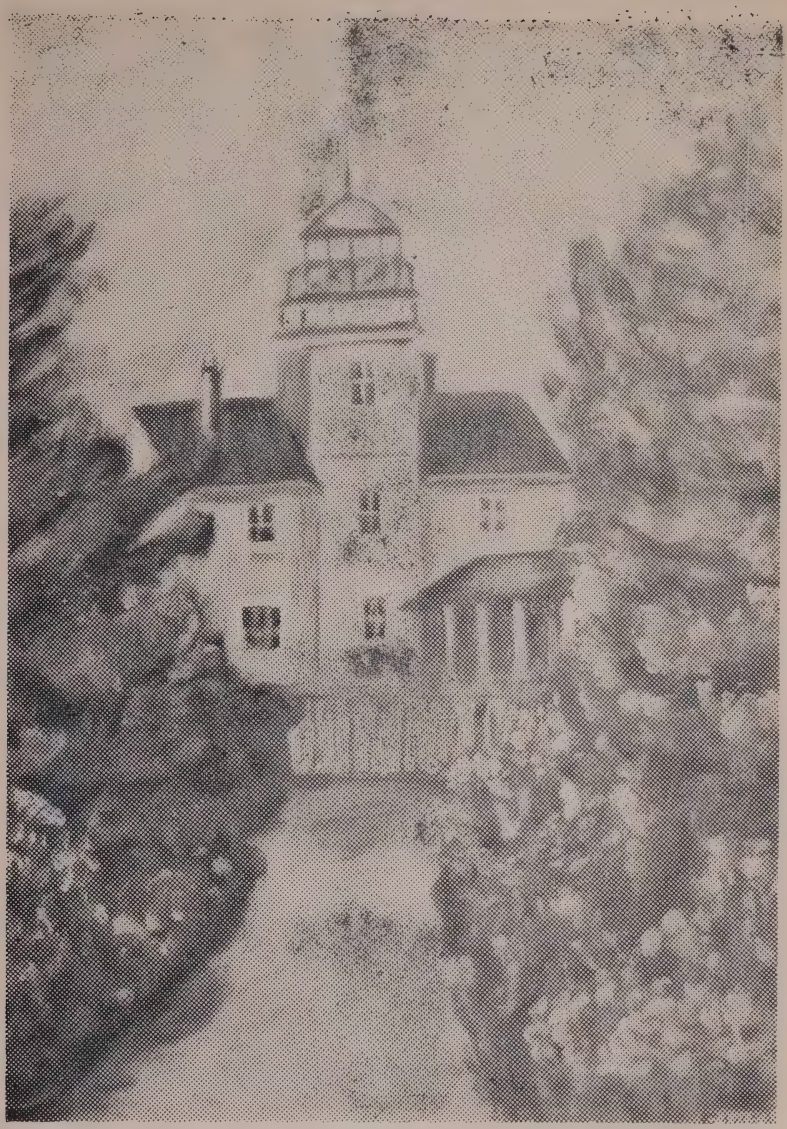
Ghosts answer no questions; therefore for accuracy, verification is recommended—viz., a perusal of the story of the "Haunted Lighthouse".

The girl's name in the story being "Muriel", the ghost herein must be a "she".

Now to go on with the one-sided ramblings from which it is learned there is a chasm leading from the beach up to the light-house, up and down in which she could walk or should I say flit. You never saw a ghost walking.

Previous to World War I there was a bath house with rooms and bathing suits on the beach below, with a board walk just like Atlantic City, ha! ha! Many tourists used to bathe there and play on the beach and occasionally enjoy a clam bake, feeding many hundreds.

Crawling over the jetty rocks which divided this bay beach from ocean beach, bathers sprawled in the sun on "Whale Rock", an enormous whale-shaped rock. (Sand has completely covered this old landmark).



The old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse from an early painting showing the approach through "lovers lane".

A short distance up, the ocean beach was to be found extending from a part of the cliff, "Castle Rock", eroded away by the sea, it has gone the way of Jump-off Joe, of Indian legend fame.

During happier days the little ghost has seen and heard songs, laughter and mirth. Through lovers lane to the portals of her

abode, throngs of people have entered and been awed by the scenes from the tower.

Now the little ghost is saddened; they plan to tear down her happy home. Will she, like a woman scorned, live to haunt the premises and adjacent park?

Since the above was written, the Highway Commission has rescinded orders to raze it. To efforts of the Lincoln County Historical Society credit must be given for saving the old lighthouse.

The historical background, much of which has been brought out and published by this Society, had much to do with their later decision.

Much has been said previously, and more will be said in the future, by this Society with regard to saving and perpetuating this old landmark as a monument for future generations.

So long as the Lincoln County Historical Society may endure, they will never let this fabled old Lighthouse meet an ignoble death, as did the grand old Battleship, "Oregon".

A LITTLE INFORMATION ON SHIPPING IN YAQUINA BAY

The largest vessel ever to enter this port was the "Golden Mariner" of 21000 ton displacement. The smallest was the steam launch "Mascot" built at Yaquina about 1890 by Burroughs Bros.

Wrecks occurring in this vicinity were: Steamer "Yaquina City" in 1887 on South Beach, no lives lost. The "Yaquina Bay" grounded South Jetty, total loss, no lives lost. Steamer "Farralon" 1889, partially wrecked on bar, three lives lost, including Chief Engineer. Iron Bark "Atlanta" near Yachats 24 lost in 1898. In 1908 steam schooner "Minnie Kelton" foundered off Cape Foulweather, eleven of crew of 19 lost. Sloop "Pilgrim" 1912 all lost (5).

Many other tragic deaths from drowning on and near the Bay, notably a small boat swamped in early '90's crossing to South Beach; seven men, women and children drowned. (The survivors were a brother and sister who lived on Beaver Creek, as I remember their names were Mull).

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